

**National Technology Alliance
Questions and Answers
April 2001**

Comment about the NTA Technology Areas and type of acquisition instrument. Any conflict between the comments here and the BAA will be resolved in favor of the BAA.

Several of the answers to the questions addressed below refer to the draft Technology Areas that NIMA expects to include in the NTA BAA. These draft Technology Areas may be found at the URL: www.nima.mil/poc/contracts/nta/techareawebfinal.pdf. However, NIMA is considering deleting Technology Area 1, "Independent Assessment and Evaluations" and incorporating this activity within each of the other four Technology Areas. NIMA expects to release a draft NTA BAA in early May 2001. This draft will provide further information about the expected structure of the NTA regarding Technology Areas.

The type of acquisition instrument depends on several factors. If the "Independent Assessment and Evaluations" technology area is "rolled into" the remaining four Technology Areas, then it is expected that a contract awarded pursuant to the Federal Acquisition Regulations will be most appropriate for the assessment and evaluation portion of each Technology Area. Offerors may choose to propose an other transaction for prototype projects or other acquisition instruments for the remaining portions of each Technology Area, as they see fit. That is, each Technology Area may have more than one acquisition instrument awarded to the one offeror selected to address the technology challenges in the respective Technology Area. NIMA does not anticipate having a preference for any particular type of acquisition instrument. Each offeror should decide which instrument(s) to propose based on the composition of the proposed team, the different intellectual property rights protections provided by each type of instrument, and other considerations.

1. Question: What level of security requirements will be implemented? Security was mentioned as being important, but security did not show up as a key issue in summary.

Answer: The NTA serves the Defense and Intelligence communities; therefore, some projects will require cleared personnel and secure facilities. The number of classified or unclassified projects underway at any given time will depend on the Government needs at the time and the development opportunities presented by the companies and institutions supporting the NTA. At a minimum, each Technology Area Manager should have TS/SCI/SI/TK clearances and each Technology Area Team should have access to a Secret Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF). Some, but not all of the individuals in each of the Technology Area Teams will undoubtedly require either collateral or SCI clearances, but the level and number of clearances required will vary with the types of NTA projects underway.

2. Question: Will there be any exclusion clauses? For example, if company A is involved in NTA web-related projects, will company A be excluded from similar web-related pursuits with DoD? Does NTA participation represent a conflict of interest on any DoD or Federal programs?

Answer: Throughout the NTA acquisition process, the contracting/agreements officer will use the general rules, procedures, and examples of Federal Acquisition Regulations Subpart 9.5,

Organizational and Consultant Conflicts of Interest, to identify, evaluate, and resolve organizational conflicts of interest. No potential organizational conflicts of interest have been identified at this time. Potential offerers who form consortia are expected to address access to proprietary information of other companies in their consortium agreements.

3. Question: Is NIMA a “member” of ARDA with direct involvement in technology investments?

Answer: The Advanced Research and Development Activity (ARDA) in Information Technology was created as a joint activity of the Intelligence Community (IC) and the Department of Defense (DOD) in late November 1998. The National Security Agency (NSA) has established an organizational unit to carry out the functions of ARDA. NIMA is a member of the IC, but is not directly involved with the management of ARDA activities. More information about ARDA may be found on the Internet at: www.ic-arda.org

4. Question: What is your relationship with In-Q-Tel?

Answer: The NTA has no formal relationship with In-Q-Tel. The NTA coordinates efforts with In-Q-Tel and other U.S. Government research and development efforts as much as is practical.

5. Question: The program manager stated that current efforts related to information/data security and privacy are “down” and that the NTA is not doing much in this area. Will this be a strategic thrust area for the NTA acquisition?

Answer: The draft Technology Areas that NIMA expects to include in the NTA BAA are posted on the NIMA BAA web site at: www.nima.mil/poc/contracts/nta/techareawebfinal.pdf. Requirements for NTA projects are continually reviewed. Therefore, the number of projects currently funded for a particular type of technology challenges does not necessarily indicate the level of research that will be funded in the future.

6. Question: I would think that as NIMA “transforms” to NIMA as an e-business, as well as other agencies, that the NTA would focus some energies in this area. Will this be a strategic thrust for the NTA acquisition?

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7. Question: NIMA’s interest is advanced research, but other agencies want applied research. How will the NTA recompile address this difference in the criteria selection and source selection efforts?

Answer: The purpose of the NTA is to discover, initiate, or accelerate the optimum commercially available solutions to meet U.S. Government technology needs. In doing so, the

NTA carries out basic and applied research, prototyping, demonstrations, evaluations, and development of technology solutions. NIMA and other NTA government participants are interested in a mix of advanced and applied research. Requirements for NTA projects are continually reviewed; therefore, the number and type of research (advanced, applied, etc.) projects being undertaken at any given time can not be predicted. The NTA BAA will provide additional details about source selection criteria.

8. Question: What percentage of your budget comes from NIMA's NTA base budget, NIMA NTA CDAs, other agencies' CDAs, or other agencies' internal budgets, (i.e., detail budget sources)?

Answer: In the past three fiscal years, funding levels have been nearly evenly divided among NIMA, Congressionally Directed Actions (CDAs) and non-NIMA sources.

9. Question: What is the distribution of R&D percent of NTA funding between commercial I/T companies, aerospace companies, universities, etc?

Answer: The distribution of funds is continually changing based on the number and value of projects awarded.

10. Question: What is the average funding level for a contract?

Answer: The average contract funding level has varied dramatically based on the Government's annual technology needs and program awards. Individual project tasks have ranged in value from \$20K to \$5M. Overall contract values have been as high as \$25M per year.

11. Question: What examples can you cite as successful commercial products that have resulted in the market as a result of NTA funding?

Answer: NTA funding has developed, helped develop or improved: digital tape cassettes, D2 magnetic tapes, teleprompters, high resolution displays for medical diagnosis, advanced iris recognition security systems, wireless broadband communications, video storage, high definition TV and Direct TV, RavenView and the Multi-Media Archive & Analysis System.

12. Question: What initiatives are currently underway to exploit XML technology in the interchange of intelligence products? Has there been any work so far in developing an intelligence framework standard XML DTD.

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13. Question: In the telecommunications area is there an interest in network and/or communications protection from intrusion, i.e., information warfare attacks, virus, denial of service, etc.?

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14. Question: Who are the members of the NTA NEB (agencies, names)?

Answer: Current participants in the NTA Executive Board (NEB) include: Air Force, Army, Central Intelligence Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, Navy, National Institutes of Health, National Imagery and Mapping Agency, National Reconnaissance Office, National Security Agency, Dept. of State, Office of Naval Research, and US Geological Survey.

15. Question: The current labs are all focused on information technology. Do you prefer teams to focus on particular technology areas or do you prefer a broad focus like the current labs?

Answer : NIMA does not anticipate that the NTA BAA will indicate a preference for either narrowly or broadly based teams. The draft Technology Areas that NIMA expects to include in the NTA BAA are posted on the NIMA BAA web site at: www.nima.mil/poc/contracts/nta/techareawebfinal.pdf. Acquisition instruments (contracts or agreements) will be awarded separately for each Technology Area and each Technology Area will be awarded only once. However, NIMA may award multiple Technology Areas to a single offeror that demonstrates excellence in more than one or all five Technology Areas. NIMA anticipates that some technology challenges may span more than one Technology Area and that coordination and cooperation among Technology Area awardees will be required.

16. Question: Under “other transactions” authority, who owns the product or intellectual property? How do NTA members protect their intellectual property? What process is in place to protect the intellectual property rights of developing group/individual? What kinds of intellectual property protection among alliance members have been used previously?

Answer: Please see section C2.3, Intellectual Property, of the “Other Transactions (OT) Guide for Prototype Projects.” A hyperlink to the guide is included on this web site.

17. Question: Will the web site that includes contractor names also include a short description of capabilities or areas of interest? If a company provides a capability that applies across contracts or teams, will the NTA facilitate teaming or contact between offerors?

Answer: The NIMA BAA web site at www.nima.mil/poc/contracts/baa.html will include a link to a form on which potential offerors can post organizational and capability information specific to the NTA acquisition.

18. Question: Will NIMA use ACE to assist in NTA proposal evaluation?

Answer: The NIMA Acquisition Center (NAC), a division of NIMA's Procurement and Contracts Office, will provide support and assistance for the NTA acquisition directly and through a partnership with the National Reconnaissance Office's (NRO's) Acquisition Center of Excellence (ACE). The NTA BAA Source Selection Team will be comprised of both NIMA and non-NIMA Government employees.

19. Question: Will a draft BAA be released for industry comment prior to the final release of the BAA in spring 2001?

Answer: Yes. NIMA expects to release a draft NTA BAA early May 2001.

20. Question: Will the solicitation establish unique labs for each technology area? How will NTA be organized?

Answer: There will be no "Labs" under the new NTA structure. The term "Lab" has led to some confusion in the past with other "National" laboratories, such as Los Alamos. The relationship between the existing NTA labs (NML, NIDL, and NCAT) and the NTA is not always clearly understood. Therefore, there is a desire to more closely link the efforts carried out under the auspices of the NTA with the NTA Program Office itself. The Technology Areas that NIMA expects to include in the NTA BAA are posted on the NIMA BAA web site at: www.nima.mil/poc/contracts/nta/techareawebfinal.pdf. Acquisition instruments (contracts or agreements) will be awarded separately for each Technology Area and each Technology Area will be awarded only once. However, NIMA may award multiple Technology Areas to a single offeror that demonstrates excellence in more than one or all Technology Areas. NIMA anticipates that some technology challenges may span more than one Technology Area and that coordination and cooperation among Technology Area awardees will be required. It is expected that awardees for each Technology Area will be called Technology Teams, such as the "Digital Technology Infrastructure Team" or the "Imagery, GIS and Cartography Team."

21. Question: In forming consortiums of commercial organizations under "other transaction," are there minimum compliance certifications? What are the terms that NIMA/NTA expects, encourages, etc. with respect to consortia/teams, etc. that apply to the BAA? For example, BAAs specify a prime with articles of confederation, etc. among teammates. In practice, awards are given to prime and teammates may/may not get \$ depending on deals they cut. In reality, most primes refuse to guarantee any work shares and in practice many teammates do not get full return on investment. Does NIMA/NTA allow each member team to be awarded a task order? Or must it go through prime (who collects a tax)? What model will NTA accept re task order participation?

Answer: Contractor team arrangements for contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements are addressed in the Federal Acquisition Regulations at Subpart 9.6. Consortia and joint ventures for other transactions for prototype projects are addressed in the "Other Transactions" (OT) Guide for Prototype Projects at section C2.6. Each offeror should decide which teaming arrangement to

propose based on the composition of the proposed team, the type of acquisition instrument proposed, and other considerations.

22. Question: Are large teams specifically encouraged? (Since teaming in general seems to be encouraged.) Teaming was mentioned. Can companies compete (respond to BAA) on multiple teams? Will you allow a proposal to form a new consortium that is not part of NIDL, NML or NCAT that addresses a Government need?

Answer: NIMA does not anticipate that the NTA BAA will indicate a preference for either large or small teams. Companies or institutions may participate in offers for more than one Technology Area. There will be no "Labs" under the new NTA structure. The term "Lab" has led to some confusion in the past with other "National" laboratories, such as Los Alamos. The relationship between the existing NTA labs (NML, NIDL, and NCAT) and the NTA is not always clearly understood. Therefore, there is a desire to more closely link the efforts carried out under the auspices of the NTA with the NTA Program Office itself. The Technology Areas that NIMA expects to include in the NTA BAA are posted on the NIMA BAA web site at: www.nima.mil/poc/contracts/nta/techareawebfinal.pdf. Acquisition instruments (contracts or agreements) will be awarded separately for each Technology Area and each Technology Area will be awarded only once. However, NIMA may award multiple Technology Areas to a single offeror that demonstrates excellence in more than one or all five Technology Areas. NIMA anticipates that some technology challenges may span more than one Technology Area and that coordination and cooperation among Technology Area awardees will be required. It is expected that awardees for each Technology Area will be called Technology Teams, such as the "Digital Technology Infrastructure Team" or the "Imagery, GIS and Cartography Team."

23. Question: If a company has many commercial, state, and local Government business units, can the defense business unit form an "intra" company consortium that meets the criteria for 845 contracts?

Answer: Please see section DL1, Definitions, and C1.5, Reasons to Use Authority, of the "Other Transactions (OT) Guide for Prototype Projects." A hyperlink to the guide is included on the NIMA BAA web site.

24. Question: Who will be involved in the source selection. Will it be done by NIMA or a representative group from the agencies supported by the NTA?

Answer: The NTA BAA Source Selection Team will be comprised of both NIMA and non-NIMA Government employees.

25. Question: Will more than one award be made in any particular strategic area or lab; in other words, would there, for example, be one or multiple IDIQ contracts for a single area if IDIQ were the contract type of choice?

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each Technology Area will be awarded only once. However, NIMA may award multiple Technology Areas to a single offeror that demonstrates excellence in more than one or all five Technology Areas. NIMA anticipates that some technology challenges may span more than one Technology Area and that coordination and cooperation among Technology Area awardees will be required.

26. Question: How firm would you assess the announced schedule and how/when would slippages be announced?

Answer: Any schedule changes will be posted on the NIMA BAA web site at www.nima.mil/poc/contracts/baa.html . Please check this site from time to time for the latest schedule information.

27. Question: Since an 845 OT requires a prototype, can this instrument be used for the outreach or user support work?

Answer: It is expected that the "Independent Assessment and Evaluations" Technology Area will not be awarded as an other transaction for prototype projects. However, the remaining Technology Areas may be awarded with a variety of acquisition instruments..

28. Question: What is the definition of “significant extent” for participation of a nontraditional defense contractor? How will this be determined if awards will be of an IDIQ type where specific taskings are not determined in advance?

Answer: Please see section DL1, Definitions, and C1.5, Reasons to Use Authority, of the “Other Transactions (OT) Guide for Prototype Projects.” A hyperlink to the guide is included on this web site.

29. Question: Can you provide total contract values for the three original contracts to Sarnoff, Minnesota Mining, and Autometric? If contracts were omnibus, how much money has been provided to each for each task order?

Answer: As of mid April 2001, approximately \$36 million has been awarded to Sarnoff, \$34.4 million to the National Media Lab administered by 3M, and \$43.8 million to Autometric. Individual project tasks have ranged in value from \$20 thousand to \$5 million.

30. Question: Will NTA require small business participation as prime or subcontractor? If so, what? Are portions of the proposal designated set-asides for 8A, MBE, etc. types of companies? Preferences for disabled?

Answer: NIMA encourages Small Business Concerns, Small Disadvantaged Business Concerns, Women-Owned Small Business Concerns, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and Other Minority Institutions to submit proposals under this BAA either individually or as members of proposed teams. However, the BAA will not provide a set-aside for funding proposals from minority institutions.

31. Question: Will notification of BAA release be sent to an electronic e-mail distribution list? If yes, how do we get on the distribution list?

Answer: There will be no electronic notification of the NTA BAA release. NIMA expects to release a draft BAA in early May 2001 and the final NTA BAA in early Aug 2001. Please check the NIMA BAA web site at www.nima.mil/poc/contracts/baa.html and the Commerce Business Daily (CBD) from time to time.

32. Question: Notionally, what are the major evaluation criteria being considered?

Answer: In accordance with FAR 35.016 concerning BAAs, the primary basis for selecting proposals for acceptance will be technical, importance to agency programs, and fund availability. Cost realism and reasonableness will be considered to the extent practicable.

33. Question: Are the vehicles anticipated to be awarded under the prospective BAA intended to have an IDIQ/task order flavor or a more specific completion flavor?

Answer: No specific structure has been identified. It is anticipated that the NTA BAA will encourage offerers to propose acquisition instruments that they believe will best support the overall goals of the NTA. The structures proposed may be different for each offeror and NIMA may award several different types of contracts or agreements.